

1921

## Two letters

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### Recommended Citation

Haskins & Sells Bulletin, Vol. 04, no. 03 (1921 March 15), p. 21

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computations were proved" rather than "The computations were proven." Similarly, the word *incompleted*, while correct, is unusual, and *not completed*, *incomplete*, or *uncompleted* is better.

As to the quality of correctness, it is not necessary for me to enlarge on the need for accuracy in every statement of facts or figures appearing in the report. As to grammatical correctness, I find that there are some types of errors which occur over and over again. The most conspicuous of these I shall take up.

The matter of tense seems to be a stumbling block to many. The past tense is the tense of narration. Hence we use the past tense throughout the comments, except when the facts indicate the need for a distinction. Consequently we say throughout the report "The cash was verified," "The securities were inspected,"

etc., not "has been verified" or "have been inspected."

Present facts, that is, statements which are always true or the truth of which continues into the present, are expressed in the present tense; as "The accounts receivable were reviewed with the credit manager and appear to be collectible. We are informed that it is the Company's practice to write off accounts receivable as soon as they are regarded as uncollectible"; also, "The inventories are stated at cost."

In referring to the inclusion of items in any of the exhibits, the present tense is used: "The contingent liability on notes receivable is shown in Exhibit 'A'; "This apparent discrepancy is due to errors in accounting, which are detailed hereafter in these comments"—not "which will be detailed."

*(To be continued)*

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## Two Letters

A PROPHECY is fulfilled and a well-deserved tribute expressed in two letters, which are substantially reproduced below, and which relate to our Mr. Paul Shepard who recently completed a most difficult "lap-over" engagement for one of the leading railroads of the country.

Mr. Simson, in writing to Mr. Ludlam under date of October 23, 1905, referred to Mr. Shepard as follows:

I have known Mr. Shepard for the past fifteen years and believe he would make an exceptionally good man. . . . He is far above the average as an accountant and is not handicapped in any way by personal habits which would make him objectionable. He is extremely quiet in his manner, but I know that he is thorough in his work and a man of more than ordinary discretion. I believe that if you can use him you will not regret it and that he will be an addition to the force."

As a sequel to the above, Mr. H. W. Eastman, formerly of our staff and now with the United States Railroad Administration, wrote the following to Mr. Cook under date of December 29, 1920:

I heard a few comments the other day which pleased me but which I thought would please you more. The accountant assigned to check the separation of the —, and who is one of the best in the Railroad Administration, after spending a brief period on the work, returned to Washington and reported that the Railroad Administration would be throwing money away to go into it; that the separation made by Shepard was the finest that could be made; and other comments along the same line. Mr. Shepard holds a high place in the opinion of our Mr. — who is in charge of field audits. I thought you might be interested in knowing how some of your men are esteemed by the opposition.